

REMARKS

Claims 4-8 and 10-13 have been canceled, and claims 1 and 14 have been amended. Applicants reserve the right to pursue the original claims and other claims in this application and other applications. Claims 1-3, 9 and 14 are pending.

Claims 1-3, 9, 10, and 12-14 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Ananda (Letter to a Retail System Manager of United States Postal Service on February 21, 1997). Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Claim 1 recites a method for a vendor to dispense postage over a network to a remote personal computer that comprises "obtaining, by the vendor, a meter license from a postal service, said meter license being associated with a meter account assigned to the vendor, said meter account being maintained at a data center; receiving, via the network, a transaction request for postage from a customer using the remote personal computer, the customer not having a meter license from the postal service, said transaction request including information from the customer, said information corresponding to the transaction requested and payment method; processing the requested transaction by requesting the data center to create evidence of postage payment and to account for the created evidence of postage payment in the meter account assigned to the vendor; effecting payment for the transaction based on the information received from the customer; receiving the evidence of postage payment created by the data center; and sending the evidence of postage payment to the remote personal computer for use by the customer, where the customer can obtain postage from the vendor without having a meter license from the postal service." Thus, a mailer (customer) can print postage utilizing a meter account assigned to the vendor, and therefore the customer does not require a separate meter license or meter account.

The Ananda letter describes a PC postage product, called StampMaker, that allows a postal customer to create stamps at the home or office using a personal computer, modem, and printer. A software program allows the user to print stamps. The Ananda letter is a Letter of Intent to submit an Information Based Indicia Program

(IBIP) evaluation product (as specifically noted in the letter from W. Wilkerson to Ananda dated April 23, 1997, (copy provided with the Office Action) confirming receipt of the Ananda letter of February 21.

The Office Action has not provided any indication as to where in the Ananda letter there is any disclosure, teaching or suggestion of the vendor obtaining a meter license from the postal service, the meter license being associated with a meter account assigned to the vendor as in the present invention. At no point in the Ananda letter is there any disclosure, teaching or suggestion of the vendor obtaining a meter license from the postal service, the meter license being associated with a meter account assigned to the vendor as in the present invention.

The Office Action has also not provided any indication as to where in the Ananda letter there is any disclosure, teaching or suggestion of processing the requested transaction by requesting the data center to create evidence of postage payment and to account for the created evidence of postage payment in the meter account assigned to the vendor as in the present invention. At no point in the Ananda letter is there any disclosure, teaching or suggestion of processing the requested transaction by requesting the data center to create evidence of postage payment and to account for the created evidence of postage payment in the meter account assigned to the vendor as in the present invention

As noted above, the Ananda letter is a Letter of Intent to submit an Information Based Indicia Program (IBIP) evaluation product. Thus, the product generally described in the Ananda letter is intended to comply with the USPS IBIP specifications, and more specifically the June 1996 USPS IBIP Indicium Specification. As specifically stated under the heading "Product Concept Narrative," in the Ananda letter, "the 'stamp' generated by StampMaker will take the form of a Bar Code that represents client information, a unique 'stamp' number, and other information specified in the June 1996 USPS IBIP Indicium Specification." This Indicium Specification, which is being cited in an Information Disclosure Statement, with a copy enclosed, filed concurrently herewith in this application, specifies the requirements for indicium applied by customers using

either a computer-based or a meter-based approach. As noted in Table 3-1 of the Indicium Specification, the indicium is required to include the License ID in both the computer-based bar code and the meter-based bar code. On page 3-2, the License ID is defined as the data element that represents “the customer’s unique license identification number.” Thus, if the system generally described in the Ananda letter generates a stamp that represents the information specified in the June 1996 USPS IBIP Indicium Specification, the customer is required to obtain a license from the postal service and this customer license number is included in the indicium. This is in direct contrast with the present invention, in which a customer can print postage without having a meter license or meter account assigned to the customer, but instead utilizes a meter account assigned to the postage meter vendor.

There is no disclosure, teaching or suggestion in the Ananda letter of a meter license being associated with a meter account assigned to the vendor. Furthermore, there is no disclosure, teaching or suggestion in the Ananda letter of dispensing postage in response to a transaction request received by a postage meter vendor over the Internet from a customer that includes “processing the requested transaction by creating evidence of postage payment” and “accounting for the created evidence of postage payment in the meter account assigned to the postage meter vendor” as is recited in claim 1.

For at least the above reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 1 is allowable over the prior art of record. Claims 2, 3 and 9, dependent upon claim 1, are allowable along with claim 1 and on their own merits.

Claim 14 includes limitations substantially similar to claim 1. For the same reasons given with respect to claim 1 above, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 14 is allowable over the prior art of record.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the claims of this case are in a condition for allowance and favorable action thereon is requested.

Respectfully submitted,

/Brian A. Lemm/
Brian A. Lemm
Reg. No. 43,748
Attorney for Applicants
Telephone (203) 924-3836

PITNEY BOWES INC.
Intellectual Property and
Technology Law Department
35 Waterview Drive
P.O. Box 3000
Shelton, CT 06484-8000